

Sharing our Islands

POCKET ISLAND POETRY

Brings us together

Guernsey



Nial West International
Island Games XIX



In the spirit of the **Island Games**, this book of poetry aims to bring our Islands and our communities closer together, to share what is special about living on an Island; what we have in common, as well as the uniqueness of each of our Islands.

The brief for the open call, simply: “*A View of my Island*” challenged poets to reflect on the beauty of their Island, its environments, social or political commentary, historic events and figures, or why their Island is special to them, what makes home, why they returned? Common themes have emerged including the rock and stone on which our Islands are formed, the beauty of the seas, pride in our Islands’ history, heritage and folklore, our language and retaining our individual cultures.

It has been a great honour for **Guernsey Arts** to reach out and have such a positive reaction to the project, a legacy of Guernsey 2023, which we hope will lead to many more cultural collaborations. We would like to thank all organisations across the Islands that helped promote the opportunity, and to all the poets who contributed, a huge thank you, this book wouldn’t exist without you!

Please read, enjoy and share with fellow Islanders.

- ***Stephen Ainsworth, Chair of Guernsey Arts***



ÅLAND



MARIEHAMN, X: 60.097079, Y: 19.934837



hemvändare

klipporna har burit mig sen barnsben,
och de värmer mina trötta axlar
men värmen försvinner med hösten,
och likaså gör jag

skogar och stigar jag känner så väl,
ser ni mig ännu som er?
kan vi än dela ungdomens hemligheter och
skratt, säg finns mitt smultronställe kvar?

för jag växte ikapp med skogen och klipporna,

horisonten lockade mig att åka,
havet bad mig komma tillbaka
det var så bitterljuvt att säga farväl,
trots att jag ville fara

jag tror det är något som finns i varje öbos hjärta:
längtan att lämna,
skräcken att aldrig återvända

om inte havet tar dig
kan världen sluka dig hel

Julia Danielsson

turning home

the cliffs have carried me since childhood,
and they warm my tired shoulders
but the warmth disappears with autumn,
and so do I

forests and paths I know so well,
do you still think of me as yours?
can we still share our youthful secrets and laughter,
will you tell me where the wild strawberries grow?

cause I outgrew my forests and my cliffs,

the horizon asked me to leave,
the sea begged me to come back
it was so bittersweet to say farewell,
even though I wanted to go

I think you can find it in the heart of every islander:
the longing to leave,
the fear of never returning

if the sea doesn't take you
the world might swallow you whole

Prinsessan på vitsippskullen

Hon var prinsessa i ett vackert slott
byggt av silver och guld,
av rikedomar var slottet fullt,
guld och silver och ädla stenar,
vita som vinterskogens grenar

Hennes slott låg på en magisk plats
Vitsippor växte där likt snö,
likt moln i en frusen sjö
Alla ängar var vita och gröna
Alla skogar var ljusa och sköna

Prinsessan själv var vackrast i världen
Hennes ögon var gröna som en skog
Nattens mörker flydde när hon dog
Likt moln var hennes hår,
en våg av silke ner mot hennes tår

Nu är kullarna kala och grå
och ingenting växer längre där
På kullen där en gång en mäktig här
Stred tills alla var döda
Och alla blommor var röda

Likt en snöflinga föll prinsessan
Vinden bar henne ner till en strand
Och täckte hennes kropp med gyllene sand
Och fast marken sköljs av saltat hav
Växter vitsippor än på hennes grav

Frans Erlandsson

The Princess On the Flower Hill

A princess she was
all of nature obeyed to her will
She lived in a castle on a far-away hill
The hill was ever-green and ever-bright,
filled with roses and anemones of white

Her land was filled with magic
The skies and seas were always blue
the grass was lush and the forest too
Her castle was filled with silver and gold,
jewels and diamonds from days of old

The princess herself
was both beautiful and fair
Like silk and snow was her hair,
like clouds up in the skies
A green light shone from her eyes

The hill is bare now
no flowers, no trees grow there anymore,
on the fields where once the armies roared
and soldiers drenched the ground in red
until the nature was cold and dead

The princess lives no more,
like a leaf in the wind she was blown away
and was buried under sand in a nearby bay
Even if her land has lost its prime,
flowers grow on her grave 'til the end of time

Frans Erlandsson

Traveling Åland's Byways

As I drive on the red granite byways
The spruce, birch, and pine trees sway
Where the land and the sea are paired
Animals can be found on land, sea, and air.

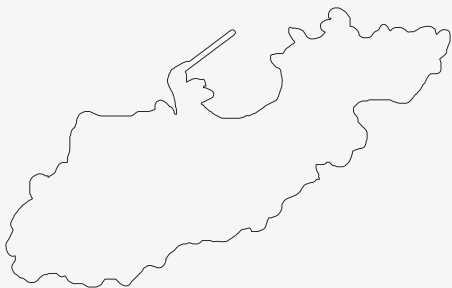
The hepatica and anemone line the byways
Dressed in their red, blue, white, and gold
The color of our flag laid out on the land
A land that will never grow old.

Ferries and boats link the byways as I travel from water to land
Åland is not just one island
But 300 and skerries and more
It reaches out to its father like a hand.

ALDERNEY



SAINT ANNE, X: 49.71333, Y: 19.934837



Aurigny

Cornwall said to Normandy,
"Let's make a baby.
We could call her Alderney."
Normandy said, "Maybe.
But she must be the best of us.
I'll wash her in the sea.
And while she is a little one
I'll keep her close to me"
Cornwall granted grudgingly,
But said, "While she is young
Let her know her English name
And speak her father's tongue."

The Blue and White

Alderney - the Island that time forgot.
Some may believe that or some may not.

Sport; you name them we have them all.
You can play darts, run a long way, or just bash a ball.

Alderney - the Island time forgot
Always happy to meet you on the field of play.
Making new memories at the end of each day.

Alderney - the Island time forgot.
You well may remember it, you may well not.

Wishing everyone a chance to enjoy and take part.
The Alderney way, is to have a lion in your heart.

FALKLAND ISLANDS



STANLEY, X: -51.697736, Y: -57.851670



The Ocean Laps Upon These Shores

The ocean laps upon these shores,
Just as they do on yours.

I see the water meet our land,
Crash on rocks or lap on sand.

I see the spray amidst the waves,
Droplets dance and misbehave.

The same moon guides our tides each day,
Between the headland and the bay.

Tides that push and pull the seas,
Waves are carried with the breeze.

Connected by the oceans, vast,
Our connection clear at last.

Between our islands far and near,
Behold the islands we hold dear.

The ocean laps upon these shores,
Just as they do on yours.

Elena Lindsey

Still as Soldiers above Stanley

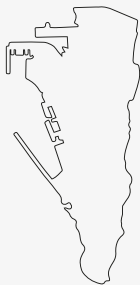
I walk under the southern hemisphere's stars;
still as soldiers above Stanley.
My shoes smash up the frost,
light exploding and dashing off in sprays,
highlighted by the moon.

Early morning and the hills of Wireless Ridge
and the Two Sisters echo with Antarctic wind.
In the distance a tyre squeaks,
it could be the only car in the world.
The sun starts to pink the sky,
saluting this statue of a night.

GIBRALTAR



GIBRALTAR, X: 36.140591, Y: -5.353608



The Bay of Gibraltar

The resplendent Bay of Gibraltar
surrounding our cherished hometown
boasts a wealth of magnificent sea life
the sea surface radiates a shimmering gown.

Ocean flora and fauna flourish
while Thalassophiles admire in awe
these mesmerizing creatures' realm
that bring gratification galore.

Southern end of the Iberian Peninsular
the narrow Straits proudly stretch out
opening up the Med and Atlantic
the vast blue waters spread about.

'Tween Herculian pillars of strength
pods of dolphins and whales swim free
glimpses of sunfish shimmying past, you'll experience
filling all ocean lovers with glee.

Venture down near the sea bed; it's magic
around sea grasses seahorses wrap their tails, spider
crabs moult their shells periodically
and octopi breed without fail.

The display of sheer splendour is captivating
we're just fascinated, enthralled
to witness such magnificent beauty
from this remarkable niche we cannot be hauled.

Halt a minute...what are these devastating news?
the seas are hurting, being destroyed
by us humans, we're so reckless
at all cost, this, we must avoid!

Reports of extinction and decline
species of impeccable creation
guilt and sadness grip our conscious
as they appeal for our co-operation.

Let's be their voice, let's not allow
such breath-taking biodiversity,
suffer habitat loss, destruction
being subjected to copious adversity.

Time to stand up, to be counted
change our ways; become sustainable
marine life stood the test of time, they deserve it,
this proposal is obtainable!

Melanie Soiza-Stagnetto (The Nautilus Project)

An Imposing Limestone Promontory

"A view of my island" poetically
Neanderthal man archaeology
Dolphins and apes, ornithology
An imposing limestone promontory
Gaming, insurance, funds and fintech
Bunkering, shipping and the odd wreck
Doors to manual, completed cross check
Globetrotting tourists on a sun deck

British political duopoly
Linguistic Llanito monopoly
Covid embattled economy
Calentita pan dulce gastronomy
Schengen and Brexit treaty concerns
Madrid Brussels London, meeting adjourns
Political parties take it in turns
At school it's Shakespeare, Dickens and Burns

Community culture migratory
Colour nor creed discriminatory
Ambition to share our prosperity
Identity cast for posterity
Hosting the Games edition XVIII
Covid impaired the years in between
On to Guernsey for number XIX
A Bailiwick welcome from those dressed in green

Mike Nicholls

Gibraltar: The Great Siege 1779-1793

The Limestone Lion raises his head
It sniffs the early morning breeze
And looks down at Gibraltar Bay.
The scene is set for Great Siege's final act.

He sees the work of the Spanish Dons
Floating batteries that do not sink
Lined up to destroy the King's Bastion defences
Gaining the Rock their objective.

General Elliot orders for the braziers to be lit.
A surprise present for the Dons
Hot potatoes to warm their hearts
To burn and sink their hopes.

The spectacle begins
Cannons spit flame and iron at the Bastion
The British their cannon balls do they heat
Soon of hot potatoes the Dons will get their fill.

The Limestone Lions gives a hearty roar
The Spanish ships are burning to the core.
They are engulfed in flames
The great Spanish project in despair is consumed.

With red hot balls that from Elliot's guns were fired
The Great Siege was ended.
The Limestone Lion then gave his biggest roar
A salute to all the lives that had been uselessly expended.

Angelika Bosco

Shining Like a Star

Beautiful rock, so high and majestic,

We see you standing where the Mediterranean
meets with the Atlantic.

All kinds of birds flying above you,

Finding rest as they go on their route.

A city with strong walls that resisted wars and sieges,

So to live here, I feel blessed with all these riches.

We welcome a king cause our queen has now gone,

Now her son Charles sits on the throne.

May he love our rock and like his mum, reign with trust and faith.

For 'those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength'

God bless our King and our grand Gibraltar,

A precious diamond on the sea, seen shining from afar.

Janet Pardo

LEVANTE

Sea-flanked
Battleground for cawing gulls
And arrowhead swifts
That swim through the
Airless morning.

Grey fluff-muffled world
And the orange lights of bulk
Carriers, their bass horns
Filling the static fog;
Their superstructures
Disembodied,
Like the faraway towers
Of a city shedding its parts
To the veiled bay.

And are the bin men now showered
And in bed, fragrant
Next to waking wives,
Their eyelids heavy
With beads of sweat?

GOTLAND



VISBY, X: 57.634531, Y: 18.294771



Äutkeik yvar mein ái - Gotland

Strand'n jár full av stain u en u ann'n rauk
Kveiar tar uss ti ypne räum, äutmärkte för akarbräuk
Himmeln färges grannar var gangg soli gar ör sjöen
En keik så far snaikstu leiv, um än själ'n jár bidröven

Martallar yvar allt, alle jár di krumme
Blasvädar jár någe vör far yvarkumme
Rabbisar strittar umkringg u beiar brummar
Unggifär sum mavar sum talar till när de jár summar

Otn dag ska vör ha var iveste da
U ti fest har vör drikke u sjukla
Jär de malvädar blair dei sjövagi u kväld'n ret ljummar
Tar främnes pirrvittar fysst u bull'n sen, da jár han dummar

Skogsbaggar di baitar, lambi di skreiar
Kubb bleir kastne pa någens teiar
Släktaskap matt' var gangg raides äut
Haim bei uss pa Gotland sägar man; de raidar si nukkk ti släut

*Original language – Gutamål
(ancient island language)*

Äutkeik yvar mein åi - Gotland

The beach is full of stones, one and another limestone stack
Small roads take us to open fields, where the farmers hack
The sky becomes coloured every time the sun sets in the sea
One look and the spark comes to life, the soul can be let free

Low pines all over, they are all skew
Windy weather is for us nothing new
Rabbits dart about and bees buzz
Kind of like tourists when it's summer, they come in a rush

We will have afternoon coffee every day
At parties we have drikke [1] and pastry
If the weather is windy, the sea will be rough and the evening is tepid
If the guest take the cookies before the bun, he is quite stupid

Gotlandic ponies grazing, the sheep bleat
Kubb [2] are thrown on someone's feet
We must on all occasions figure out how family branches bend
At our home on Gotland we say; it always work out in the end

[1] local home made yeast brew

[2] blocks in a local game

Potato

När vör skall sätta pörör pa ora
Fåroje gar vör fösst till släkadöie
utar upp så mike vörr bihövar
Me släke u pärar nere ei jårde
väntar vörr till hausten för att pärör skörda
Di gär gutt till vintorns köld
u bleir sum ain leiten sköld
så vörr kann jeita us mätta u goa.

When we plant potatoes on our Fårö
first we go to the seaweed beach
and take as much as we need
With seaweed and potatoes down in the field
we wait for the autumn to harvest
It gets good in the winter cold
and is like a small shield
so we can satisfy our hunger.

My poem is about potatoes in local language on
the Island Fårö, north of Gotland

Faroyma, a dialect of Gutnish

Ronnie Lundin

GOTLAND-MITT HJÄRTE

GOTLAND, GOTLAND MEIN FOSTAROI,
DÄR JÄR JA FÖID U DÄR SKA JA DÅI.
PA STADU GRUND MAN ALLTUT GAR,
U ALL LYKKÅ MAN EI LEIVE FAR.
LUGNET, MÄNSKAR U MIKE SOL,
NJAUTAR AV SJOEN PA BEKVÄMAR STOL.
VÄLKUMNE ALLE, VÄLKUMNE HEIT,
U NJAUT AV LEIVE SUM JÄR SÅ LEIT.
GOTLAND - ALLT SUM BIHÖVS.

GOTLAND-MY HEART

GOTLAND, GOTLAND MY BIRTH ISLAND
WHERE I WAS BORN AND I WILL END.
ON STEADY GROUND I ALWAYS STAND,
GET ALL HAPPINESS THAT LIFE CAN SEND.
THE CALM, THE PEOPLE AND LOT OF SUN,
ENJOY THE SEA ON A COMFORTABLE CHAIR
HAVING FUN.
WELCOME, WELCOME EVERY ONE, ENJOY THE LIFE -
DON'T ALWAYS RUN.
GOTLAND - IS ALL YOU NEED.

Min Ö

Den blåa lagunen. Vidsträckta stränder.
Vindpinad martall och russföl på heden.
I gryningens ljus, se lammungars dans.
I skimmer av glitter från morgonens dagg.

Förbi gårdar, genom ängen. Över hällmark och i snår.
Di Sma alltid vakar vart vi än går.
Oknytt i marken skall inte förargas.
En gåva från ovan dom oftast förstår.

Horisont som står fri. När skymning tar vid.
I magiska färger en kvällshimmel målas.
Hör Tornsvalars skri eka i skyn.
En förtrollande jakt över gränder i stan.

Ruiner som grönskar. Sanddyn som vandrar.
Kalksten som vittrar, till raukar förvandlas.
Här själen kan andas och drömmar får leva.
På Ön mitt i havet vi alla förenas

My Island

Crystal clear quarries. Coastlines for miles.
Foals on the moor and windswept old pines.
At break of the day. See little lambs play.
In shimmering glitter of dewdrops since dawn.

Close by farms and through fields. Over rocks into brushwood.
Di Sma always watch us wherever we go.
Gnomes in the ground should not be displeased.
A gift from above should keep it at peace.

An endless horizon, when twilight sets in.
In magical colors a night sky is painted.
Hear common swifts cry, echo up high.
Their spellbinding chase over Visby's old town.

Ivy draped ruins. Sand dunes at drift.
Weathering limestone to raukar transforming.
Here the soul can find rest and dreams come to life.
On the Island I love we all can unite.

Nina Carlsson

Gotland, min vän

Över blommande hav och saltstänkt strand,
förbi sillgrisslors karga klippa,
sent en kväll flög hon åter till Gutars land,
för ett adjö hon helst velat slippa.

Hon svävade runt kalkstenshus och knackade på mitt fönster.
Jag tvekade, men öppnade och släppte in,
nattens svala luft och Rindis gröna mönster,
för ett samtal över solvarma jordgubbar och porlande vin.

Jag insåg då att det var sista gången vi talade om gamla kyrkoroch fiskelägen,
överkörda igelkottar med sina vassa taggar.
Om blåeld och vallmo som växer längs med vägen,
och ulliga lamm och deras baggar.

Vi mindes tillsammans varma sommarkvällar,
när släken doftar fränt från en pudrig sanddyn.
Månen som går upp över gråa klipphällar,
och Bysen i skogen som hotar att förvränga din syn.

Hon log när hon talade om silverljuset över Visbys kullersten,
och rosornas sammetsröda blad,
ruinerna efter kloster och begravda ben,
som vilar i vår fina stad.

Innan hon lämnade mig ensam kvar i sommarnatten,
smekte hon min kind och sa att vi nog ses igen.
Sedan försvann hon ut över Östersjöns vatten,
medan hon viskade: Farväl Gotland, min vän.

Gotland, min vän

Over salt misted beaches and blossoming sea,
past guillemots barren hiding place,
to the land of Gutar she flew one last time to visit me,
and bid a goodbye she did not want to face.

She passed by houses made of limestone and knocked on my door.
I hesitated, but opened and let in the fine
fresh night air and Rindis green pattern on my floor,
for a conversation over sunwarm strawberries and sparkling wine.

I realized when we spoke of old churches and fishing villages, it was the last
time, we reminisced about ran over hedgehogs with their sharp thorns,
of viper's bugloss and poppies growing thru the lime,
and woolly lambs laying next to each other in perfect lines.

We talked about a warm summer night,
when the sea grass smells bitter from a powdery sand dune,
Bysen in the forest threatening to distort your eyesight,
and the moon which rises over grey rocks, it must have been in June.

She smiled when she talked about the silverlight over Visbys cobblestones,
roses with their velvet red petals hanging down,
along the ruins of monasterys and buried bones,
which rest in our lovely town.

Before she left she told me something I already knew,
she caressed my cheek saying this is not the end,
and then vanished in the waters of Östersjön dark and blue,
whilst whispering: Goodbye, Gotland my friend.

~Gotland~

Ingen människa är en ö
Men en ö är jag

Den råa och karga
Den nakna och sårbara
Den ensamma introverta vintern
Den tysta långt bort från fjärran land

Den ljuva och skira
Den varma och inbjudande
Den extroverta livfulla sommaren
Det kraftfulla havet som dånar in mot varje strand

De säger att jag är vacker
Men stundom tvivlar jag på att det är sant
Trots att jag älskar att vara fri
Händer det att min självbild vacklar ibland

I den kyliga hösten när jag kan känna mig bortvald -
ser du hur jag då lyser av färg?
I den ödsliga vintern när jag kan tvivla på om jag duger -
ser du hur jag gnistrar då?
I den avvaktande våren när jag kan undra om jag kommer att blomstra igen -
kan du då se mina knoppar?

Ingen människa är en ö
Men en ö är jag
Kanske är de stillsamma årstiderna förutsättningar för att jag ska kunna skina idag?

Sara Magnusson

~Gotland~

Nobody is an island
but an island am I

The raw and barren
The naked and vulnerable
The lonely introverted winter
The silent one far from distant land

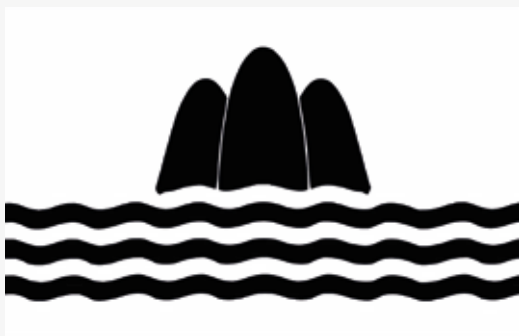
The sweet and tender
The warm and inviting
The extrovert lively summer
Wanting someone to hold my hand

They say I'm beautiful
But sometimes I doubt that it's true
Although I love being free
From time to time it happens that my self-image falters

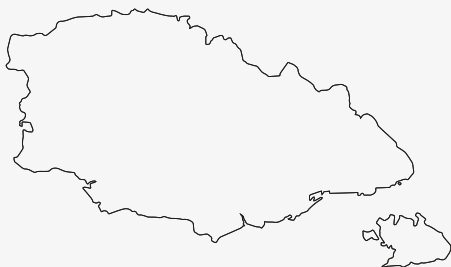
In the chilly autumn when I sometimes feel rejected -
can you see how I glow with colour?
In the desolate winter when I sometimes doubt if I'm good enough -
can you see how I sparkle?
In the awaiting spring when I sometimes wonder if I ever will bloom again -
can you see my buds?

Nobody is an island
but an island am I
Maybe the quiet seasons are conditions for me to be able to shine?

GOZO



VICTORIA, X: 36.044706, Y: 14.241118



My Gozo

Gozo...meaning JOY
And Joy it is indeed!
So unique in its character
Somewhat 'still' rural and tranquil

Sea, sun & undulating terrain
Characteristic of this gem
Peaceful village cores
Where time seems to stand still

As history suggests, our destiny was harsh
Our island's strategic position... Leaving us alone and
exposed Got our ancestors ending in slavery
Victims of selfish raiders

It's no surprise that Gozitans are a brave bunch
Hardworking as can be
Their mentality so tough
Rooted in tradition

So many signs around the island
Of multiple rulers who saw potential
Namely the Knights of St John
For 250 long years

As we enter a new age of economic development
Lest not forget where we come from
Protecting our identity is vital
Let us keep it sustainable... Let's leave Gozo a JOY to live in

Matthew Xuereb

GUERNSEY



SAINT PETER PORT, X: 49.458813, Y: -2.534359



Pouques de Giernes (Fairies of Guernsey)

Who's disturbed the Dolmens?
Their ancient stories stir.
Who has scaled La Longue Rocque,
pesky pouques or just a blur?

Who has fired Cornet's cannon
just before midday?
Who's singing in the sea caves
and splashing on Saints Bay?

Who's shaken down the pine needles,
swinging down at Le Guet?
These pouques are causing mischief,
all the way to Moulin Huet!

Who's chucking chips down at the bridge,
galling all the gulls?
Who's hurtling around Hugo's House
like a charging bull?

Who's prodding all the peastacks?
And hoping for the worst.
Who's drinking up the reservoir
just to quench their thirst?

This island's filled with magic,
which means pouques galore.
So watch out for those fluttering wings
when you arrive upon our shore.

Jack McGahy

Island Born

We are the Island born, the sea our succour,
Our rhythm, our solace, our life.
Still, dark, summer nights
Hush of sea swell rising and falling
Gentle heaving, breathing comfort
Matching our own respiration.
Curled beneath blankets,
While sea mist advances, soundless
Curling and claiming, disguising realities.
We listen to the unworldly wail of the foghorn,
Both saviour and fear-maker simultaneously.
While souls of lost mariners and sea monsters
Are captured in the raucous throats
Of seagulls as they rise shrouded in shadows
From their granite roosts.
Wind whipped waves crash wildly against rocky shore
Against cliff face, against manmade walls Scouring
the air with salt, sand, spume.
Seasons change
But the ebb and flow of the tides is our constant
We are the Island born, the sea our succour
Our rhythm, our solace, our life.

Trudie Shannon

Home of my heart

Guernsey my home, a little island in the sea
No other place I'd rather be.
Quaint stone cobble streets
Summers are spent on the beach.
My island is nine miles by four
Fishing, swimming, walking and cliffs to explore.
Little cottages built of granite stone
Made by man's hands alone.
Golden sands and rocks, washed so clear and clean
Famous artists came and painted the scene.
Renoir painted 'The Pea Stacks' at Moulin Huet
A wonder for all to see and never forget.
Just off the French coast, the island is full of history and fame
Sir Major Isaac Brock, a Guernseyman, died a hero in Canada
Victor Hugo, a French writer,
lived and wrote here, still famous to remain.
French monks arrived with their skills and
their little chapel is with us still.
Rich in wildlife on land and sea
The Ormer is still a local delicacy.
We have our own language and currency
Military memories of occupation are still to see.
The famous Guernsey cow
Still providing us with its wonderful milk even now.
Local sport has made its mark.

Sylvia Fossey

Our Guernsey Island Games

Do what you are good at
We welcome you here
Showcase your sport
You have probably been through endless
Suffering to make it to here
Your audience is waiting
Encouraging you on
We really do appreciate you travelling so far
Happy to show
Our Island games will be the best
But friends we will remain
'Til we meet again
A La perchoine

Anchored

The castle sails into view
guarded by a pick-n-mix of buildings
that gaze upon the gathering warmly
before beckoning them in.

Those cobbled streets
have foiled many navigators
but the land speaks to those that care to listen.

It speaks of a journey;
battles and heartbreak and tragedy
the sand dances to the song of the land
and the wind sings a sweet serenade;

The bunkers slowly emerge from their shells
the stories spread themselves to every corner
but most importantly, our land begins to heal.

Rebecca Hind

Guernsey

Generally thought by the British as Jersey,
Unusually gifted with gardens of flowers,
Encircled by beaches and lazy blue water,
Respite from the heat of the work-weary hours.
Naïve in the trusting of boxes on hedges,
So secret the banks in their great wealth procuring,
Encased in a time warp and tossed in the sea,
Yet proud and enchanting and strangely alluring.

Guernsey

The beautiful Isle of Guernsey is bliss,
Twenty five square miles make up this.
Along rugged paths on cliff top walks,
Bramble, bracken, gorse and herring gulls squawks.
Blackthorn, broom, shrubs and all kinds of trees,
Bluebells, primroses, foxgloves, flora to please.
Countryside inland for a long delightful hike,
Tranquil rural lanes to enjoy on a bike.
Guernsey's history is centuries old and vast,
Neolithic sites, wars, smuggling, all from the past.
Several other islands to visit and so much more,
Many sandy beaches with rock pools to explore.
A little chapel, museums, a castle and forts to delight,
Guernsey's charming treasures are a wonderful sight.

Martin Fisher

Swimming Guernsey

Guernsey's necklace of pearls, a month of swimming bays -
stony Fermain in its armchair of green woods,
rockface falling to Le Petit Port, sea-spruced twice daily,
Moulin Huet's craggy fortress where Renoir painted Victorian Girls,
and severe Saints, haven for tiny boats swinging on their moorings,
then by tumbling cliff and ladder to Le Jaonnet,
breasted, buttock'd, waverolled and, tucked behind,
La Bette, haunt of nakedness and hidden delight,
and so to Petit Bot, dreaming in all weathers of the sky.

Onwards and westwards to Portelet, bound in ropes and chains
to slow highwalled Rocquaine, friendly host of water sports,
and chummy guardian fort, the Cup and Saucer, perpetual call to teatime;
north now to seaweed smocked, smelly wrack'd L'Eree, in sight
of Lihou, monk ghosted islet, where the evening sun, red suited and ribboned,
is swallowed by the sea.

This island of curves and angles spinning the compass so that the eagle's eye of
hop and jump turns wayward the coastal ramble to the easy bays
of buckets and spades, sandcastles, grandparents in easy chairs,
the vast sands of Vazon, fortified to keep Boney at bay, dear Cobo
where all ages meet, Port Soif, a lagoon at high tide, and Portinfer claimed
by brave, foolhardy windsurfers leaping to defy gravity, and on
to the whelk and winkle gatherers at Ladies Bay, and the finale -
the magnificent sweep of L'Ancrese, heaven of Guernsey's swimming paradise.

The Frenchman

Hard to reach and difficult to leave again
That's what the old Frenchman said
all those years ago

Seafoam dances on granite blushing pink,
embarrassed by her beauty, the rock
remains steadfast still

The sea arrives, leaves yet always returns
Pebbles yearn for its embrace, weight to soften edges
and the island slowly returns home

Steep Herm Steps (A Boy Expecting the Trident)

Only the Sea can show
An horizon true,
Mathematical & naked,
There, ever distant battles fight silent the Skies -
There, black-capped winds from a warmer South
Wield Scimitars thrusting me down Barbary reach,
Honed.
 They crack open clouds,
 Insolent in their sail.
 I consult with the Handmaidens,
 Clocks of Saltwater mark Lunar Hours
 With Caesium accuracy -
 Cool & smooth like Hospital floors,
 At a 23.5 degree tilt,
 The World plays gentle the mind of Youth,
 So close & so warm to be as a Friend.
 (will we fall off the edge?)
 Dancing Orange Sun, you chase the clouds -
 Fear them the banishment,
 Fear them all figments of flight or fight,
 A vanguard listening for Sandpiper Trumpets,
 To Jericho the Skyscape free -
 Vanquished now as guests of the
 Gluttoned Blue

La Sorchière

"I saw Goody Guilbert with the Devil,
With a hornèd dog did she entreat,
And it taught her to cast the evil eye,
To enslave any man she may meet."

"I saw Goody Becquet with the Devil,
At the Witches' Mass they danced unclothed,
In the Château Rocquaine she pledged herself,
It was there she became his betrothed."

"I saw Goody Massey with the Devil,
In the market square she took his hand,
And he gave her a tome of wicked arts,
Not before she was marked with his brand."
Behold all the falsehoods that were told here,
The pernicious lies that they did spread,
When the rumours did reach 'les presbytères',
They would burn us and hang us 'til dead.
In time, we left Guernsey for the New World,
And in Salem town we found our peace,
Then old Cotton began his bloody hunt,
Would our woes and our pain ever cease?
At last, the trials over, we lamented,
We lost forty-six young maidens fair,
Yet our bloodline runs strong in Salem still,
Where they smile at their friend 'La Sorchière'.

Jacob Hockey

Tour of the Island

en faveur d'Heather Watson et Maya le Tissier,
Marie De Garis and l'Âtelain Métivier,
les gens d'Guernesî welcome you to these Norman rocques
granite crowned by flowers over wonders to unlock

stories say beasts and witches run like douits through the island
let's show you our côtis and courtis - the low and high land
bianvnu à tous to here where we have seen happy times
explore, archipelago: far beyond hedgehogs and rhymes

wander gentle cliffs among hawthorn and brambles and gorse
sea from one horizon to the next in eternal course
must be curious, you said: oy-ous! flocked birds freeing
see now how Marion painted the world into being

"nou zaie a la bànk coume de couterme - pournemai lé tchau"
where waters rush and sift: pass and desist - terns turn reeling, go
we sat like Gilliat on the shores of the infinite
Rouse - listening for tide - plotting that to which we are set

your bounnet went flying there, when we rolled over dunes
whistling Jean Grosjean - marking our own dear forgotten tunes
skated over Les Marais - rowed round by Salarie
in Lihou drank enne coupai d'tée: crystal cracq à nos pids
lé spanne en chiques lies open: there are cows beyond the hedge
walked along to L'Eree to finally dive off the ledge

each inch the Earth runs north, south, east and west
enfin, in Guernsey all lines comes to rest

Adam Clayton

Ode to the Ormer

Oh ear of the sea
What do you hear?
Sitting beneath the ocean clear.

Oh ear of the sea
Where do you go?
In the tidal ebb and flow.

Oh ear of the sea
What do you say?
To fish or crabs that pass your way.

Oh ear of the sea
What tales can you tell?
From behind your oval pearly shell.

Oh ormer our ormer
Our delicacy!
Sought after prize
Pride of Guernsey,
Oh ear of the sea.

Peter Le Prevost, petethepostie

Heather Be Thy Name

Such style
Such grace
And that smile
It lights up her face

Many battles were fought
Out on the court
She played the best
She often tasted success

From the island of Guernsey
On to the international stage
She made the headlines
She made the front page

From UK Junior Champion
To UK Number One
She deserves the ultimate recognition
For all that she's done

At the top of her game
Heather be thy name

Lester Queripel

A Morning

An employee stumbles out of bed,
Swallowing a coffee black and exiting into the early dawn.
Herring gulls herald the shuttering stars,
Unveiling across the sky a reflection of deep blue.
Here a street tumbles down a town hanging off a cliff,
Smacking shoe soles off its cobbled path.
Rows of houses sink out of sight as a
Shimmer gallantly begins to round the bend.

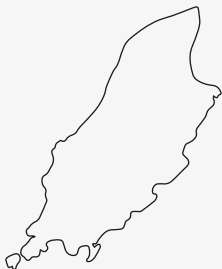
A well-dressed accountant strides alongside the sea,
Stepping over seaweed and stones tossed around the night before.
The first engines are woken up rudely,
Sputtering into action and spinning up dust.
Far-off islands suddenly appear as clear as day,
Pushing swathes of clouds up into the atmosphere.
Finally hunkering down at a warm desk,
Daytime reveals itself from just beyond the window frame.

A grateful friend greets the crystal water,
Taking a break by diving off a high wall, hands above head.
Eyes open, despite the sea salt which burns,
Taking in the floating sand and restless fish.
Ears plugged with water, the tides whisper their movement,
Shushing the lungs which have run out of air.
Bubbles first, then emerging in a splash as the lunch-hour comes to a close,
Looking back across a foaming tide, the island floats above it all.

ISLE OF MAN



DOUGLAS, X: 54.151967, Y:-4.486410



I walk on the beach

Ta mee shooyl er y traie,
Co`earroo keim er cheim;
Currit er oaie ayns emshir.
Gerrym.

Dy hooyl ny yei oo ennagh,
Co`earroo keim er cheim,
Va mee ruggit ayns shen;
Gerrym.

Cha nel scaanjoon shooyl cur liorish
Cassan oor
Geyraghey;
Co`earroo keim er cheim.

Ta mee shooyl er y traie,
Currit er oaie ayns emshir
Co`earroo keim er cheim;
Gerrym.

I walk on the beach

I walk on the beach,
Counting step by step;
Carried forward in time.
Walk of life.

To walk after you,
Counting step by step,
I was born there;
Walk of life.

No Ghosts walk alongside
Fresh Path
Clear Mind;
Counting Step by step.

I walk on the beach,
Carried forward in time
Counting step by step;
Walk of life.

Climb!

Climb! Climb to the top of a mountain,
see seven kingdoms from way up high:
the island of Man on which you are standing,
its four nearest neighbours, plus sea and sky.

Climb! Climb to the top of a wheel,
ninety-six steps spiral steeply around.
Count as it still turns three times a minute,
pumping the water from deep underground.

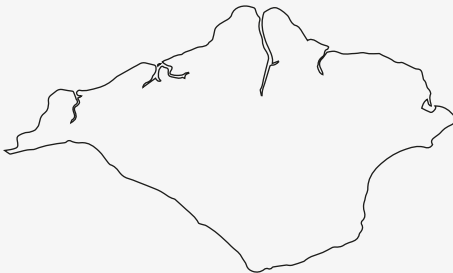
Climb! Climb to the top of a castle,
swim if you're brave in the shivery sea,
look out for basking sharks, dolphins and seals,
watch the bikes race in the famous TT.

Climb! Climb to the top of a tower,
jump on a train as it steams out of town,
explore ancient waterfalls, glens, sandy beaches,
sit by the shore as the sun's going down.

ISLE OF WIGHT



NEWPORT, X: 50.701064, Y: -1.289389



This Island Made Me

The architecture of my childhood mind,
Was formed from your chalky bones,
Like white fingers stretching to touch
The Needles, St Catherine's, Egypt Point and the Nab,
Shining tin-tacking your diamond form,
To the blue-green corkboard of the sea.

I put you away in the back of the drawer.
The slightly down at heel world
Of lettered rock and candy floss,
Mechanical laughing sailor and rusty seaside piers,
And my dad's second hand cars,
I shut you away and left
Over lead-grey seas to Mainland.

On my return with a wife and son,
We open up the locked drawers
And there beneath the cobwebs and lace,
Out it comes all shining and new
The sapphires of your skies,
The emerald of your remembered hills,
The gold of my memory and silver of my dreams.

And in dreams I return to your remembered land.
To dreamscapes with hills and cliffs in white and green,
A hill where poets walk, fair amongst flowers,
You form the bedrock of my thought

Mark Francis

Isle of Wight

Green and lush, the land spreads out below me,
As the wind rips past me speeding somewhere important.
The monument to First World War soldiers' towers above me,
And I feel the cries of long past agonies.

Back along the ridge is the ancient pepper pot,
An old oratory of monks that's seen the Sun setting into the sea, for far too long.
Which way to turn and run? I feel the pull of the sea,
And yet, in amongst the pastoral pastures, I could have family and friends' comfort.

Blinking now I'm not there anymore,
Time has taken its inevitable toll.
People have moved on, I am not what I once was,
The vibrant, coltishness is given way to solid realism.

And yet... those times when I was free in the hills and atop the cliffs,
Were like strands of granite in chalk.
The Isle of Wight is part of who I became,
part of what shaped one human, along his path.

Evening on the Isle of Wight

From my new house on the Isle of Wight
I see the Solent to the north,
And the clock tower and spire
Of Ryde Town Hall to the south.

As I look out on the Solent,
The coastal waves shine silver.
Crossed by the shadows of clouds
Making patterns on the surface of the water.

Lights on the far shore twinkle
As the sunlight fades new lights are revealed
Lights on cruise ships outsparkle them all.
But by container ships they are all veiled,

But the passing ships are not bustling,
Like noisy lorries on the motorway.
There's no wash, no exhaust noise carried on the wind,
But in total silence they glide gracefully by.

The chimney at Fawley shows three bands of red.
And buoys, unseeable in daylight, show green.
On Eastleigh's coast cars flash their lights.
And the blue glow of the Spinnaker tower is seen.

Looking out over my neighbour's roof.
As the sun sets, and the distant lights shine.
The island's evening air gently brushes my face,
This is the wonderful home I now call mine.

John A C Beattie

The Cycle Track

Take the long view -
prevailing south-westerlies
coming off the sea,
a time lapse
of millennia.

A continent drifts into
place, Britain separates,
the Isle of Wight is wearing
loose and turns around
about an inch.

Medina gathers
sediment with moon
laps. Each glow of ash
is a settlement. Some even
blaze up into towns.

Months are blown
in seconds now. The Solent
ferries its first bow star
then whitens to showers of
wakes and steam.

Smokestacks rise as
sleepers cross hatch
to mark the high
tide line. Cement
works fire.

On the bank flash
powder flares, is burnt
to clinker in
a hundred years. Now
buried. Lost.

Natural time lays
back here. Willow domes
the bottle kilns. Our
cycling stops. We wait
and watch.

Compton Bay Car Park, 1974

Rain on the windscreen.
The sound of gulls and the sea.
Tartan Thermos tea.

JERSEY



ST HELIER, X: 49.180338, Y: -2.103276



Eune veue dé m'n Île

Lé malzard m'égalue, les grèves d'or fliambent dé bord'
en aut', pèrrées d'ormèrs et d'écalin d'crista.
J'en cliunge. La mé êcliaque en r'sîn ès lèrs du Port
qu'j'empaûte. Et j'haûte ès côtes tch'êtrueûlent des criques et cras
du temps d'Adam. Adens, les salinnes siquent, blianchies;
man sang couort, rouoge et raide, avau l's artêthes dé chute
mouaie mathinne amouotheuse. J'craque, coumme du vrai d'caûchie,
d'ma séthaine, bèrchie d'louêmes, ramontant les galots
d'Frémont, dans ta tâne dg'ieau: mén êtchet et m'n êtchête.
Tu'es ma riche trésôr'rie d'tas, d'tétins, et d'êtos,
ma minne à pièrres prêch'rêsses, ouainieux, écadins, crêtes...
L'yi du cliavé vait pus qu'la mith'thie d'un pêtcheux:
j'clyinn'te en t'cliav'tant dèrché. Ou blyînque acouo - la veue.

A view of my Island

The emerging sun dazzles me, the golden beaches flame from side to side, weighed down as though with stones by ormers and crystal broken shells. It makes me screw up my eyes. The sea splashes in surf at Les lèrs du Port [3] that I pocket. And I doze on the coasts which spread inlets and crevices from the time of Adam [4]. Upended, the salt-pans dry, whitened; my blood runs red and strong, along the arteries of this marine cairn in love. I crackle/boast, like quayside vrac, about my mermaid, rocked/lulled by waves, bringing up all the shingle of Frémont [5], in your den of water: my reef and my windfall inheritance. You are my rich treasury of offshore rocks, nipple-shaped rocks, and rock stacks, my mine of preaching stones, killicks, chippings, crests... The eye of the lobsterpot [6] sees more than the aiming/looking at oneself in a mirror of a fisherman: I flutter my eyes while checking on you like a lobsterpot again. It still blinks - the lighthouse.

[3] the eyes of the bay, i.e. the entrance to the bay

[4] from time immemorial

[5] snoring

[6] i.e. the mouth of the lobsterpot

Geraint Jennings

Not' Langue

Tchi qué jé sommes?
Jé sommes Jèrri.
Jé sommes touos Jèrriais.
Tch'est qué j'voulons?
Tréjous Jèrri.
Jèrri jusqu'à janmais.
Et j'allons! So come on! J'allons!
J'allons changi chu monde.
J'allons! Come on! J'allons!
J'allons sauver not' langue.
Comment, comment?
Comment qué j'pouvons?
J'pouvons sauver not' langue?
Ch'est en chantant.
En chantant qué j'pouvons.
I' faut chanter ensembl'ye.
Don chantons! So sing on!
Chantons, bouonnes gens, chantons!
Chantons! Sing on!
I' faut chanter ensembl'ye.
Ch'est not' langue. It's our tongue.
Not' langue - lé Jèrriais.
Not' langue. Our tongue.
Not' langue acouo eune fais.

Our Tongue

Who are we?
We are Jersey.
We're Jersey to the core.
What do we want?
Always Jersey. Jersey forever more.
Come on!
We have to change this world.
Come on!
We have to save our words.
How come, how come?
How can it be done?
How can we save our tongue?
With our song.
It can be done.
Together, sing as one.
Chantons! Sing on!
Sing on, good folk, sing on!
Chantons! Sing on!
Together, sing as one.
Not' langue. Our tongue.
Our language - Jèrriais.
Not' langue ou s'sa. She'll be
Our language again one day.

La Tâche

Today he is lé Tâch'ron.
Standing tall,
taking the lead,
setting the pace.
There's a knack to this tâche.
He's an expert at working la
frouque à chîn dés,
heavy in small hands,
turning la terre.

It's his brother's turn to stoop.
Following the fork,
breaking his back,
shaking les vîngnes
with green grubbed hands, to free
les p'tites nutty rîngnons from
rich friable soil,
eune riôle dé Rouoyales
lying in his wake.

The old man completes the fork.
Crawling à grappîns,
Climbing lé cotîl,
dragging bent knees
bound in rubber, back buckled by
fused vertebrae.
Yet, determination brims
la pannelée d'patates
filling up at his side.

Y'a hardi d'récolte
pouor faithe la tâche

Marianne Sargent

La bèrcheuse dé l'île

Où'est qu'tu d'meuthes?
My island sings to me.
Où'est qu'tu d'meuthes?

I hear it on the breeze passing through fields
cared for over our history,
In exploratory footsteps on the flagstones of watchful medieval monuments,
And, loudest of all,
when the water takes over,
drowning out the rest of the world with its music.

This question has been asked before.
The island knows well my answer,
asking now simply for the joy of hearing my reply.
I give it willingly, every time,
the answer I hope always to be able to give:

En Jèrri, en Jèrri

I hear the question, too, when I roam
But in a tongue less tempered by ocean air
The cold answer already implied, of course -
Not here.

But when the light colours in the lines of the coastal landscape,
When the sun hits my skin, or - somehow always a surprise - the rain,
When the salt in the air hits my tongue, and the scent fills my lungs,
I tune in to the subtle radio-vibration of my home.
I hope I will always hear this question echoing through the soft soundscape.

Où'est qu'tu d'meuthes?

En Jèrri.
En Jèrri.

Katie Bastiman

ORKNEY



KIRKWALL, X: 58.984581, Y: -2.960656



The Seven Days of April

On the first day, there stood a ship in the bay,
a bulk of navy and white on the sea,
real as an image, pointing to Hamnavoe.

On the second day, the sky was cloudy grey.
The sea was flat. The rotor on the turbine turned.
And a goldfinch perched on the alder tree.

On the third day, the buildings on Inner Holm
sat peaceful in the sunlight. On the jetty
the orange windsock waved. A crow flew alone.

On the fourth day, a greyness fell from the sky,
soft as a dove, on the sea, and on the roofs
of the town, and on the poles of harbour lights.

On the fifth day, the sunlight over the hills broke
near Orphir, lighting up the green of the fields,
whitening the sea, as the people awoke.

On the sixth day, the ferry hummed at the pier:
powerful, massive, ready. Across the sound,
the lighthouse glinted its presence, white and clear.

On the seventh day, the rising sun flooded
the sea and flashed silent on the fishing boats.
A seaman walked the pier, booted and rugged.

The town looked out each day in silence and waited,
biding its time, for the world to start again.

Piers Cain

Pelamis Prototype with Blue Moon

Dark masses, the islands lie at dusk
in the still sea. A rock dove skirts the geos,
homes in on a ledge, folds its wings.
Flotta's amber tongue flares –

a lambent taper poised over votive lights.
In the east the blue moon rises,
a rose window glowing in the simmerdim.
From the field by the shore a lamb's voice rings.

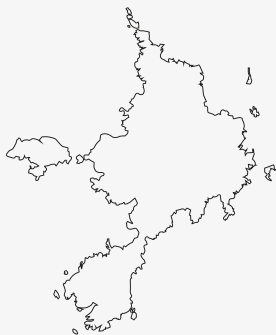
Time; it is time. Masts raise swaying stars
as black-hulled boats breast the tide
leading the Sea Snake along the Sound,

a procession that inches through the nave –
St John's Head, the Black Craig,
the west door.

SARK



SARK, X: 49.430630, Y: -2.365031



Sên'Maguâre, ûn dur bûn cõr

Tût l'bûn monde, wiè dur ben
šé'k j'avon á dire, nû lê ptî Lapîn,
d'Sên Maguâre, ki vîn d'ten
sù nûtre ile dê ñér Corbîn.

An Grân Bretane, il'ut san bé.
l'cruézit la mër, pûr la sènte afère.
D'tûte lz'île, i'chuézit Sér,
pûr priè dûve sê bûn frére.

l'fut bichipe d'la vile d'Doñ.
l'gêrisit ûn comte du nom d'Luéscon
ki Sér, l'Êtà é l'île d'Bréko
li dûnit cûme ûn grân don.

Kár lê pêsôn é lz'uézyò
tût s'paçit á la mènti ô Bûn Dyeu,
lá y û k'fut l'múlin á yò
é l'Soléf flate Tintajeu.

Pûr Sên'Marie, i'bâtisit
une ptite chapële prê du vyer Măny.
Sesante deù frére, i'lz invitit
É du monde pûr lê sũny.

Nûtre Sên'Maguâre, chut dur bûn cõr,
i'sòvit dê jóne, ô Bûn Dyeu priàn,
é ûn pêçeuř ki fut ben mõi –
l's dbutit é fut vivàn.

Lê vyer Saxôn, mème ûn dragon,
i'trambõdre tû dvân sê sérmân.
É lz'île du Chnal, sù san bâton
fùdre an pê é sàñ fõrbân.

É lê Sérçê, nû, j'eûme tût plèn,
d'manjy é d'travât é pà d'mal ù d'fem,
Á la Mónni, j'fime du pen.
šé'k i'n ssa jhamê égen.

An Grân Bretañe, il'ut san bé.
l'cruézit la mër, pûr la sènte afère.
D'tûte lz'île, i'chuézit Sér,
pûr priè dûve sê bûn frére.

D'tût chûnna a té nûtre chanson,
K'ûl é longe, j'nûz éscuzon.

Sên'Maguãre, ûn dur bụn cõr

All the good people, hear very well what
we have to say, we the little Rabbits,
of Saint Magloire who came from afar
to our island of the black Ravens.

In Great Britain, he had his cradle.
He crossed the sea for holy business,
and of all the islands, he chose Sark
to pray with his good brothers.

He was bishop of the town of Dol.
He cured a Count by the name of Loiésco
who gave him Sark, Êtacq and Brecqhou
as a great gift.

So the birds and the fish,
everything fled to the Good Lord's half,
where the water mill stood
and the sun caresses Tintagel.

For Saint Mary, he built
a small chapel close to the old Manor.
He invited sixty two brothers
and people to keep them fed.

Our Saint Magloire, this very good man,
saved children, praying to the Lord,
and a fisherman who was dead –
he got up, once more alive.

The old Saxons and even a dragon
all trembled before his sermonising.
And all the Channel Islands under his staff
were at peace, scoundrel-free.

And we the Sarkese, we had plenty
of food and work and no evil or hunger,
and at the Moinerie, we made bread.
We will never see such times again.

In Great Britain, he had his cradle.
He crossed the sea for holy business,
and of all the islands, he chose Sark
to pray with his good brothers.

Our song recounts all this:
that it is long, forgive us.

SHETLAND ISLANDS



LERWICK, X: 60.162576, Y: -1.159187



Shargin Bairns

So du's bored is du
lay on a cot an mak fur furt.
Fill dee breest foo o fresh air
du'll surely no melt if he rains.
Awey du goes, mak fur da beach
an hock fur traesur i da shoormal.
Hae du a swap wi dee waand i da loch
ur sail a siggie boat doon da burn.

I mind wis traipsin ta da skule
day in an day oot whitiver da wadder
twa mile dere an twa mile back.
Hit wis aaricht i da lea o da hill
but whin you med hit by da manse
you wir open ta da elements, a gale -
owind nicht lift you clean aff your feet.
Fur aa dat my boy, I still
lookit forward ta gaen ta da skule.
An der's mony a day fae syne
Ah'm wist I wis still dere.
Du nicht no tink hit my boy
but dis is da best days o dee life.

James Sinclair

Whingeing Kids

So, you're bored are you..
Put on a coat and make for out,
fill your chest full of fresh air,
you shouldn't melt if it rains..
Away you go, head for the beach
and dig for treasure at the waters-edge.
You can cast your line out into the lake
or sail a reed boat down the river.

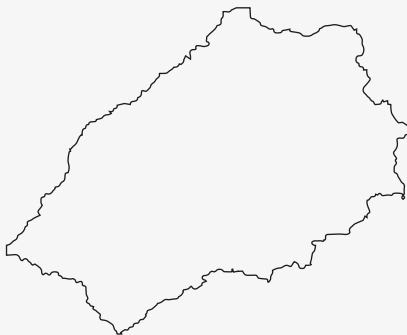
I remember us walking to school
day in and day out, whatever the weather.
Two miles there and two miles back.
We were alright in the shelter of the hill,
But when we made it past the church hall
We were open to the weather, a gale
of wind might lift us clean off our feet.
For all that my son, I still
looked forward to going to school
and there's been many a day since
I've wished I was still there.
You might not think it my son,
but these are the best days of your life.

James Sinclair

ST. HELENA



JAMESTOWN, X: -15.924220, Y: -5.718653



Overheard (in Jamestown department store)

I hope you didn't tink I was being rude, la
When I didn't stop to chat.
It wasn't cause I wasn't in da mood, la
You mus'e know me better dan dat.

It was dat dragon glarin' over you shoulder, la
I swear I not makin' dis up.
Wit' rancid breath an' flames all a-smoulder, la
Was no way I was gonna stop.

It was five foot two an' just as wide, la
Such a ting like I 'aint never seen.
Oh, the stench of its leathery hide, la
It was fearsome to da extreme.

You da love of my life, la
An' you know how much I care.
But it would take a better man dan me, la
When face' wit dat evil glare.

It was you ma wit you, you say, la?
Dat mus-e who it was I see.
Well, best us go sep'rate ways, la.
No man want one dragon in da family!

Written in "Saint speak" (island dialect)

The Birth

Gelid sludge in ocean deep, slimed morass so deathly bleak
Dark as space and life deplete - soundless, mirthless, timeless void.
Now quaking heaving bloated beast, mantle breached and welling red
Rivers gorged with petrous blood, abyssal thunder, hadal heat
Poisoned roiling frenzied waters, pierced and stung by clots of stone
Rising, thrusting, parting high, breaching fierce through foaming waves
Skyward, heavenward, onward spews, relentless bleeding heart of Earth.
Fourteen million years have spawned a sea girthed haven of mankind.
Fourteen million years have passed the fiery dawn of tortured birth.
The birth...
The birth of Saint Helena island.

Rockfall

Rock fall Rockfall

R- R- R- Rockfall

Grumbling and tumbling and
Smashing through the back wall

Precipitation

Little drops

Wash out the grains of earth

That stop

This awesome cataclysmic crop

From crashing down from up atop

Absolved, proclaims, a basal whop

Andrew Darlow

Salted Blue Nostalgia

Scuba masks drawn tight and printed on a face,
tan lines that don't seem to ever go away,
all makes me think this SPF went to waste splashing in the bright,
blue worlds beyond James' Bay.

Listening closely for her whale song heartbeat,
somewhere beneath the glowing, sun dappled sea.
Deeply glistening. Rippling harmony.
Calm tides and clear blue skies — what more does one need?

Searching for urchins tucked into the tide- line,
helping one another up onto The Eye.
Climbing the rocks, "I'll say go when the tides high".
Little cuts everywhere, but it'll be fine.

Just lay your worries underneath the hot sun.
Salt crystals; like small stars in dark skies,
glow on — on the eyelashes and cheeks of everyone.
Trophy birds pass in flight, singing a birdsong.

Sound marking the days I wish would never end.
The salted blue nostalgia of the ocean.
Sunbathing, dipping feet in waters open.
Swimming, until the bright blue skies turn golden.

The swash of waves quietens in the harbour.
Fishers call the ferry. Take up their droppers.
Ten bullseyes, yellow-fin, crayfish and conga — catch of the day.
The day I wish was longer.

Ronaldo Johnson

White Bird

Standing at the edge of time
on this immortal ridge of ancient lava.
Time and I stand silently and absolutely still.
Flighty thoughts calmed and mind captivated
by one ethereal rainbow slicing through fine rain.

Butterfly sprinkles that settle on skin,
but I with inward focus, am oblivious to their kisses.
Magical arc of colour framed by slices of sunlight
sliding effortlessly into the blue beyond.
Beyond the past, beyond this present and into the unknown future.

Awareness creeps in around the edges of consciousness
and my eyes lock onto a luminous shadow.
A silent white ghost vibrating the air above.
She has my attention.

Obsidian black eyes return my gaze,
and as she hovers above
I imagine the feel of that snowy-velvet whiteness.
Tern of eternal spirit and legend on St Helena Island.

Angelic illusion twisting and turning through the eucalyptus canopy,
weaving with easy acrobatics shadowing the springing dog below.
A tiny silver fish on the pathway ahead.
A holy offering from the ocean five hundred metres below.

Vibration of softest feathers and she is joined by another,
then another and one more.
And they congregate.
A worship of curiosity above me.

Teeny Lucy

Our Heartbeat, Our Home

Little gem in this vast Ocean
sways with echoes of voices.
Those that have trodden.
That have sailed many days like the winds in motion.
Beauty resides and bypasses its people.
Her culture is one of a kind,
both lush green and barren earth uniquely entwined.
All mixed up in contemporary days of time.

Many imports, fewer exports
but St Helena has no need for explanation.
She stands alone protected by fortress and lookouts
yet no enemy ever trod with intent of occupation.

Dare you travel here - so far to our rare destination?
A full stop on a world atlas, island like no other nation.
Discovered by Portuguese - fought over by both English and Dutch.
Here Napoleon yearned for his homeland which he loved so much.

A billion stars sparkle above us at night
By day the sun beams so, so bright.
This island is our heartbeat,
and for her we shine our light.

Jane Marie O' Dean

Carry Stone Cottage

On the bank of a verdant valley
There is a ruined cottage
worn down to standing walls
since it was left abandoned.

A valley where the nymph once lived
Where the imprisoned Emperor was sometimes seen
free from haunting shackled dreams,
from the shackled house on the windswept plain.

A valley where the winding stream
Falls deep and steep into the sea.
The chimney cliff Black Oliver climbed
To lead and set his island free.

Thick walls of mud and stone
stand to tell the story
of a family who farmed the land,
carried stone to build their cottage.

In the barren, coastal wasteland
where mesas, dykes and peaks loom dark
hide valleys where crops and cottages grow,
by people who think with their hands.

Great names and great events
are etched in stones of history.
The stones of "Carry Stone Cottage"
are etched in hearts of island lives.

Basil George

WESTERN ISLES



STORNOWAY, X: 57.760048, Y: -7.019498



Bird Hunt on Mingulay

A bird too cold to fly
In winter's blast
Crouches down by.
When I come near
Her wild eye screams
Because she will die.
Too far – she's too far!
And I will surely slip
Fall, far down below
Where the wild waves dip.

I stretch, reach, crawl
Till my feet lose their grip;
My fingers close round
A loose stone as I fall
That would have killed her,
That will not save me!
I watch it spin down
To the depths of the sea
And she of the wild eye
Is watching me.

Jeanne Christie

Random Thoughts

An emerald set on azure Sea
Where only deer and geese are free
On heathered hill neath scented sky
Where rabbits run and eagles fly
A place with cattle and working doggies
Black faced sheep and feral moggies
Mist over sea and Northern Lights
Arms covered with midges bites
While on the shorebirds peck and call
As sandflies in swarms rise and fall
Salt wind blows in from far off place
While in the sea, wild dolphins chase
Fishing boats write on Ocean Wild
Far from sound of laughing child
Gulls float by like scraps of paper
While otter cubs in dark lochs caper
The scented coats' children's faces
On this island, one of gods chosen places

Michael Cowley, The Odd Oder

BLÀTHS EILEANACH

Feumaidh botal teth Hearach còmhdach dhe chlò
Nuair thig cion air a' chruaich is an dùthaich fo cheò
'S e crotal nan creag air a' chlòimh chuir dath ruadh
Sint' air an ròp' gus na gathan a shuathadh.

Is an lasair nar cridhe le cuideachadh ciùil
Gar cumail fhèin beò air port-òrdaig làn mùirn
Los gun sgiathalaich luchd-dannsaidh nan dithis thar nan reul
Tùs ar n-eilean bho Mhàrs 'n riochd daoimean nan seud.

Nì sinn saothair an seo is cuairt-òran nar miann-ne
Le sùil thar ar guailne – is air adhart leinn dhan chiaradh
Far am faicear na rìdhlearn uain' agus dearg
Fir Chlis gar beò-ghlacadh - aiseag nèamhaidh gun mhearachd.

Briathran sìobhalt' gan labhairt 'n teang' aosd' bh' aig na seòid
Gliocas is gàire toirt aghaidh air na deòir
Thig iad na uair an àm dhuinn fhèin bhith nar n-aonar
Gu sin nì sinn marcachd le blìonas gun ghruaimean.

'S ann nas sine tha an tìr sa na an tè agaibh fhèin
'S fhada bhuainn cuimhn' is sinn còmhla mar threud
Thug modhan dhuinn feartan nach tèid leinn am fadal
A mhaireas an t-astar gum bi sinne nar cadal.

Ach mus glasaich an latha sin, nì sinn iolach dher sgeul
An seo son dibhearsain is neart mar an ceudn'
Fàilt ort charaid air thuras gud dhachaigh 'n Inns-Ghall
Is dhan tè againn fhèin ma tha toil agad tadhal.

Scott Bennett

ISLAND WARMTH

A hot water bottle needs a Harris Tweed cover
When the peat stack slacks and the smirr rolls in
Crotall was scraped off the rock to colour fleece red
Hung on the line to seal in the warmth of sun's shed

This glow in our heart too kept there by music
Keeping us alive for warm toes to tap tunes out
For dancers to soar with partners beyond stars
From where our islands once fell like diamonds from Mars

We toil here to play here on a journey of songs
Look back to push forward with eyes on the gloaming
Where the green and the red 'Dancers' known as 'Merry'
Enchant us with colour on our celestial ferry

Soft words they are spoken in the tongue of auld Gaul
Wisdom and laughter can soon counter tears
They'll come soon enough if we're left all alone
Till then we ride out with a laugh but not groan

Our land we are told is older than yours
Our memories are distant of all living together
Habits have given us traits for safe keeping
To last us our journey until we are sleeping

Before that we'll shout out our story of joy
Here for the craic and courage when needed
Greetings dear traveller to your island home
And a welcome to ours if here you should roam.

Scott Bennett

AIR NA LÀITHEAN SIN

air na làithean sin
nuair dhùisgeas sinn
chun na grèine a'
tighinn a-steach

nuair dhùisgeas sinn
gu sàmhchair
gun ghaoth

nuair ghabhas sinn ceum slaodach
tràighean geala
ùbhlan nar pòcaidean

nuair a shuidheas sinn beag
air creagan rubha
a' coimhead a' mhuir

air na làithean sin
mas e seo na th' ann
fòghnaidh e

ON THOSE DAYS

on those days
when we wake
to the sun edging in

when we wake
to the silence
of no wind

when we amble
half moon beaches
apples in our pockets

when we sit small
on headland rocks
watching the sea

on those days
if this is all there is
it is enough

Machair

Tinkle of tiny droplets
kissing the loch
dewdrops between
single glades
fading heather
purple, peach
to bare brown.

You never really know a place
until you walk it in all seasons.

River's song has risen
quenched by heavy rain.

Now, low-lying clouds.

Encore of thunder.

Peat descending in rows
of deafening black.

Heather Mackay Young

High Summer In Scalpay Harbour

Basks the sun upon my back,
Sitting at the top of the stone steps,
That guide the eye from the horizon,
To the sea loch waters,
Lapping at the heels.

Plunged inside its bowl
Of stony gray highlands,
Punctuated with mottled grasslands,
Pre-history gamed vistas,
The harbour sits.

Summer contentment spread
Like a warm blanket on the air,
Underneath the high vaulted sky
Challenges the deep ocean,
Bob the creel fishermen's boats.

For now the gales which
Autumn, Winter wrought; may bring
Are forgotten. All that matters
Is the competing shades
Of gray, blue and green.

Isabelle Moss

Empty House Community

Welcome to the island friend, to your new perfect home,
a small untainted paradise, untouched even by Rome,
ancestral land of sea and sand and curious old stones,
and it should be at least a year until you feel alone.

Yes, welcome to the island friend, a quaint wee seaside town.
There's naught but crofts and sheep to see for miles and miles around.
The rent is climbing upwards now as income plummets down,
and when the ice caps melt the seas will rise and we'll all drown.

You'll love the quiet village life, devoid of city stress,
you'll find that life moves slower when you're occupied with less.
There's little reason left to leave the house, so why get dressed?
You'll never meet your neighbors. They've all moved to Inverness.

When you find the winters long and cannot bear the cold,
When your home's a burden as your bones are growing old,
Just open an air B&B, or sell it off for gold,
There's nothing worth belonging to unless it can be sold.

An empty house community, yes that's the home we've built.
We wrapped up all our culture and we sold it with the kilts.
But who's to blame, we dare to ask, who carries all the guilt?
All the while we take our payments as the thistle wilts.

Aidan William Armstrong

Ob Likisto

'How about a glass of wine?'

Tracey has some white cooling in the fridge

I never thought she'd be so optimistic

We sit outside the house and watch the water dance in Ob Likisto

A seaweed, seal, and rock festooned lagoon

Cut off from East Loch Tarbert by a daisy chain of islets

Just beyond them, the Skye ferry hums by

A fleeting visitation from a more frenetic planet

Some seals slip into sea, but most don't bother

We catch up 'til Flossy gets back from the fish farm

He feeds the dog, then gets a glass and joins us

Sunshine glints on wineglass, wine and water

We wear sunhats and we very nearly need them

It's warm enough for tee shirts (we don't go so far as shorts)

Breeze enough to banish any fear of midges

Lapping water is the only sound when conversation pauses

Tracey says, 'If only it was like this all the time.'

Billy's boat bobs at anchor in Ob Likisto

'If it was...' Flossy shrugs, 'we could never afford to live here.'

Learning to breathe again

When life is closing in and I am craving for a lull.
I take myself towards the beach, that skirts the Sound of Mull.

A clumsy path of pebbles, generously spread.
As tide tumbled, jumbled, as the thoughts in my head.

Pebbles bright with dampness, in pinks and creams and greys.
In seaweed shackled, limpet scarred, barnacle blistered swathes.

But here amongst this mayhem, an order can be found,
in the sea sifted tide lines of the dead, the dried, the drowned.

Bone coloured scallop shells, like shattered broken plates.
The midnight blue of muscles from a world of wrasse and skates.

But the periwinkles twinkle, like tiny shiny eyes.
Buried in the sand and stone, yet looking to the skies.

So like the coral carapace the shore crab left behind,
I let go of pent up feelings and find clarity of mind.

Lorraine Stronach

Senses of the Hebrides

Feel the breeze of the Hebrides and sway with the
Machair as it dances in the wind

Inhale the fresh sea air and melt into the white sandy
grains that line the ancient rugged coast

Be in clarity, as the stillness and serenity exude your every
thought and the waves caress the shore line

Take in the aromas of the peat and Heather and be at one with
the beauty of the earthly moorlands as your senses come alive

Each way you roam takes your breath away, as the beauty hits
you like a knife to the heart

And in a gasp, you know that its presence will linger forever

Feel the overwhelm, as the essence of magic surrounds your
very being

The sensation of freedom from the release, as your spirit rises over
the majestic hills like an Eagle soaring, gliding through the vast expanse

The vision of aurora serenading the night, as the Sprinkle of stars
twinkles in the moonlit skies

The ambiance of love and warmth from all those whose blood dwells
within the sacred Hebridean sanctuary

Feel the Vitality, take in the extraordinary and leave a Piece of your heart
to forever reside within the Hebridean spirit.

Carol Ann Smith

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Guernsey Arts is a charity which supports Island Artists and Arts organisations. Our aim is for the Bailiwick of Guernsey to be the most vibrant artistic community it can be - across all aspects of the arts.

We recognise the importance of Island culture and community and believe that this project will lead to many more cultural collaborations and friendships.

To find out how your Island can connect with *Guernsey Arts*, get in touch with the team by emailing info@arts.gg.

Russ, Jade, Jared, Louise.



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